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ABSTRACT

The eight articles in this journal issue focus on reading in the content areas. The topics covered are inservice workshop suggestions for learning content material, study skills for advanced learners, research on actual student reading done in the classroom, 12 ways to build a positive reading environment, a method of teaching note-taking, "interrupted sustained silent reading," helping students read their textbooks, and program assessment. Other journal features include a review of research on content area comprehension strategies, a discussion of administering secondary school reading programs, a list of teacher resources to use in conjunction with content area materials, and reviews of professional materials. (AEA)

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WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Volume 24 Number 2
January, 1980

Theme: Reading In The Content Areas

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APPLICATIONS SOLICITED FOR JOURNAL EDITOR

Suzanne Jund, the current editor of the Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal, will complete her term on June 1, 1980. Members interested in applying for this position should write for further information and application forms. Please send requests to: Mr. Douglas Vance
Editor's Search Committee
1822 Van Hise Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53705.

Applications should be submitted as soon as possible.

President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

Recently Rudolf Flesch published an article titled, "Why Johnny Still Can't Read" in the Family Circle magazine, Vol. 92 (NO. 15), November 1, 1979. In this article he suggested that parents go into their children's schools and identify the basal series used. If they found the basal series was not one of those recommended by Flesch (synthetic phonics) then most likely their children won't learn to read well.

I believe that the position statement of the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association (IRA) is worth sharing with you.

Position Statement of IRA Board of Directors
(Official Minutes, Nov. 1-3, 1979)

There's More to Reading Than Some Folks Say:

In light of recent public statements that suggest that reading can best be taught by using a single method through strong emphasis on a specific skill or through the use of a specific set of materials, the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association emphasizes that learning to read is a complex process requiring not only the ability to recognize words, but also the ability to comprehend and evaluate the meaning of written materials. The most important factor related to success in learning to read is the teacher. Differences in the learning styles and abilities of children emphasize the need for a variety of approaches to meet those individual needs. No single method or approach nor any one set of instructional materials has been proven to be most effective for all children. Furthermore, to learn to read well, children must read a substantial amount of material for useful purposes both in school and at home.

Therefore, it is resolved that the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association

recommends that parents and teachers exercise caution and judgment when considering statements or selecting materials that advocate any single method or set of materials as being the best one for teaching reading. Moreover, the Board expresses concern about those who use scare tactics and oversimplification to support their own positions or their own easy solutions for teaching children to read.

David J. Gustafson
WSRA President

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THE ESSENTIALS OF EDUCATION

"In an era dominated by cries for going back to the basics, for minimal competencies and for survival skills, society should reject simplistic solutions and declare a commitment to the essentials of education." This is the recent conclusion reached by 11 educational associations representing more than 400,000 members of the school community.

A joint statement entitled The Essentials of Education takes the position that "a definition of the essentials of education should avoid three easy tendencies: to limit the essentials to the three R's in a society that is highly technological and complex; to define the essentials by what is tested at a time when tests are severely limited in what they can measure; and to reduce the essentials to a few skills when it is obvious that people use a combination of skills, knowledge, and feelings to come to terms with their world."

"Educators should resist pressures to concentrate solely upon easy-to-teach, easy-to-test bits of knowledge, and must go beyond short-term objectives of training for jobs or producing citizens who can perform routine tasks but cannot apply their knowledge or skills, cannot reason about their society, and cannot make informed judgments," the statement contends.

The 11 educational organizations believe that the ultimate goal of education should be "to develop informed, thinking citizens capable of participating in both domestic and world affairs." Emphasis on the basic skills alone cannot accomplish this goal.

"The interdependence of skills and content is the central concept of the essentials of education. Skills and abilities do not grow in isolation from content," the organizations believe. "Determining the essentials of education is a continuing process,

far more demanding and significant than listing isolated skills assumed to be basic."

The organizations call upon educators, legislators, school boards, parents and others with an interest in education to specify the essentials of education more fully. "All must now participate in a coordinated effort on behalf of society to confront this task. Everyone has a stake in the essentials of education."

At a time when the question of what should be taught in classrooms across the country is being debated among educators and the public alike, it is an important step for leading educational associations to come to grips publicly with the issue of what is essential in the educational process.

Those associations contributing to the "Essentials of Education" statement include: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, International Reading Association, Music Educators National Conference, National Art Education Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Council for the Social Studies, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association and Speech Communication Association.

Information provided by
IRA Public Relations Office

Reading In The Content Areas: In-Service Techniques

by

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Content teachers are specialists in their chosen fields. They direct their energies toward student acquisition of subject matter and, therefore, do not readily accept comments like, "Every teacher is a teacher of reading." Statements like this one imply that content teachers must assume another job in addition to the one for which they were initially hired. It is rare for content teachers to be receptive to this approach as a motivation for getting them to teach reading skills. Another approach must be utilized which delivers the same message but in a more acceptable form. It is suggested that a term like "learning strategies" be substituted for teaching reading when working with content area teachers.

The following in-service suggestions are workshop vehicles through which teachers are presented with learning strategies to be used in helping students acquire content material:

1. Vocabulary Selection and Development

Vocabulary selection, helping teachers determine the words students need to recognize and comprehend, can be clarified for content teachers by having them list the concepts to be taught in a given lesson. Then, the concepts are analyzed for those words that are crucial to the understanding of the author's message. These words comprise the teacher's vocabulary list. If content teachers have already identified the vocabulary which is crucial to the understanding of a specific assignment, they are asked to list it. Sample vocabulary devices are then introduced to the teachers as prototypes. Each teacher selects one of the devices and develops it as a

vehicle through which his own vocabulary list could be taught.

2. Study Skills

Aspects of the study skills may be presented to teachers singly or as a package. The appeal can be directed toward all students or helping only those with minimal reading skills. The study skill areas generating the greatest interest among content teachers are location, evaluation, organization, and retention.

Location skill workshops may include skimming and scanning techniques. These techniques should be predicated upon "key" vocabulary words and phrases used by an author in his material. The workshop materials may range in complexity from the use of an index or table of contents in a single text to a sample library research project employing many varied resources.

The are of evaluation can encompass a potpourri of topics. A workshop could direct attention towards fact and opinion, qualifications of an author or authors, reliability and validity of materials and statements, making judgments, propaganda, etc. Workshops in the area of evaluation can also direct attention toward improving reading comprehension in general or to specifics, such as techniques for identifying main ideas.

The organizational patterns used by content authors in presenting their ideas (writing styles) may constitute another workshop. Here, attention can be focused upon ideational relationships developed through time order, simple listing, cause/effect, and comparison/contrast. Study guides are of interest to content teachers particularly if attention is directed to their use in specific content areas. Examples provided by the workshop leader should include specific applications to content areas such as mathematics, music, history, etc., rather than a very generalized SQRRR format.

Retention strategies are usually well received by content teachers. These might include instruction in using mnemonic devices, e.g., first letters of key words, outlining, note taking, association techniques, etc. Techniques that involve small group (3-5 students interaction are generally appealing to teachers.

3. Comprehension and ways to improve it appeal to content area teachers. The workshop can be directed towards the problem reader and the types of reading comprehension he can handle with his limited abilities. Or, the workshop could direct attention to factors that affect comprehension, e.g., speed of reading, purpose, vocabulary, etc.

4. What makes reading difficult for students? The direction taken in this type of workshop could include an analysis of textbooks in conjunction with: readability, student background in oral language, uniqueness of textbook vocabulary, graphic aids (or lack of same), writing styles, and so forth. These aspects might be considered when helping teachers select new textbooks.

Considerations

What's put into the workshop, in terms of learning strategies (reading skills and techniques) should have some immediate use and be practical from a content teacher's point of view. Learning strategies should point clearly to the advantages gained by the content teacher and students in knowing and using them. Advantages such as: (1) cutting down on the amount of time needed for presentation and review of materials; (2) increasing student retention; (3) improving the quality of student response; (4) and, when taught to and applied by students, the results make it possible for students to assume more responsibility for their own learning.

****

Study Skills for Advanced Learners

by

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The college-bound high-school student is probably one of the last we think of in terms of "reading improvement." Yet teachers who work with above-average juniors and seniors all too frequently find students who cannot summarize or find main ideas or read critically. The students are generally reading at or above grade level when measured by standardized tests; it is the study skills, the application of reading techniques, which seem to be lacking.

But just as vowel sounds, syllabication, context clues and the five W's can be taught, so can study skills. Too often high school reading programs emphasize the poor reader, even though reading is a skill used at all levels. Recent emphasis by parent groups, educators and the legislature have charged schools with the education of all students. This includes the above-average and gifted student.

A course in study skills is one way to expand our reading instruction in the high school. The above-average student can be taught some of the specific skills he or she will need in college studies.

Planning the Program

The first criteria in planning a study skills program for college-bound students is to include skills necessary for college and to exclude general reading improvement skills. These students are generally good readers. Basic reading skills are not only unnecessary, but will bore students. Therefore, a focus on efficient use of skills is best.

The course should also show the practical use of these skills in college.

A second factor to consider is the length and structure of the program. An effective program can be covered in 25-35 hours. It can be taught as a separate course, as a unit within a regular class, or as a "one day per week" course in the regular curriculum.

The third consideration is the instructor. While the common cry several years ago was "every teacher a teacher of reading," reading specialists have found that this is easier said than carried out. Of course, the best place to teach study skills is in a course where these skills will be immediately used. However, content area teachers are often reluctant to tackle reading skills. They may feel they do not have the time to take from content, or what skills to teach, or how to teach them. Rather than fighting these attitudes, reading specialists have a good opportunity to work with classroom teachers.

Teaching a study skills course can be helpful to the reading department in several ways. First, specialists gain credibility with teachers. By going into the classroom reading specialists show themselves as someone other than "the remedial teacher who works one-on-one." Secondly, they have contact with average and above-average students, which can give a wonderful perspective to teaching. Third, classes for college-bound students give a new image to the reading lab itself. No longer is it the place only for students who have difficulty in reading. This change in attitude is a healthy one for both students and faculty.

A study skills program, then, should cover necessary skills in a workable period of time, and with a minimum of responsibility on the classroom teacher (initially, at least) to be successful.

The Program Curriculum--A Model

The Advanced Study Skills course at Mukwonago High School is a semester-long course, which meets two or three days per week. It is taught by a reading specialist.

The course covers four main areas:

(1) Modalities of learning
(2) Writing patterns and note-taking
(3) The Research Paper
(4) Test-taking

The students begin the course by keeping a simple chart showing when and where they study. They also evaluate the success of each study session. After one week, these are evaluated through class discussion. Students look at their study habits, and discuss visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic learning. They discover their optimum learning time, place and style.

Next students begin a study of paragraph structure and ways in which authors organize material. These include comparison and contrast, cause and effect, general to specific, time order and simple listing. Several examples are studied.

After students become proficient in recognizing an author's organizational pattern, note-taking methods such as outline, summary, charts, graphs and flashcards are discussed. Students are asked to "match" methods with organizational patterns. They are given practice with both written and oral material.

When students have had some practice with note-taking, they begin work on a research paper. Students are allowed to choose their own topics. Conferences with the teacher help students narrow topics which are too broad. The students read a general resource, such as an encyclopiedia, to obtain background information, cross-references and sub-topics for their area of interest.

Next, students construct a preliminary bibliography. They are then taught how to evaluate sources. This includes previewing or surveying material. After evaluating and choosing sources, they begin taking notes. All students use the note-card method which includes sub-topic, source, and page number. When all notes have been taken, the cards are organized according to sub-headings and an outline is constructed. The rough draft is written from the note cards, and footnotes and bibliography are compiled using the correct form. After correction by the teacher the final copy of the paper is written.

The last general area to be covered is test-taking skills. This includes using symbols in note-taking, methods of memorization and recall, and using examination time wisely.

As with most courses, this one is never exactly the same. It evolves and changes with each class. But the basic areas--recognition of patterns, note-taking, research and test-taking--are always present.

Results

Does teaching study skills yield results? Although we have not done a controlled study, we do know that more students are using the reading lab. Teachers have also begun to see the lab as a resource for all levels. Students who have taken the study skills course do find it easier to do research in other classes.

We know that reading is a lifelong skill, and, even with television and radio, a primary learning mode. Therefore, all students should have the opportunity to learn and refine the skills they will need to reach their goals. A specific course in study skills is one way to enrich the reading skills of the above-average high school student.

Are Students Reading in Content Classrooms: What Systematic Observation Tells Us

by

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University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

Recent classroom-based studies have been providing an increasingly detailed portrait of reading instruction in the elementary school. Researchers systematically observing reading instruction have reported, for example, that students spend more time in self-paced activities such as filling out worksheets than in teacher-paced activities (see Otto and Wolf, in press). Durkin (1978-79), after observing reading and social studies instruction in a variety of classrooms, concluded that students frequently practiced comprehension skills with workbooks or worksheets, but rarely received instruction in the process of comprehension. These studies are important because they provide insights into reading instruction as it is actually occurring and not as we think it probably occurs or should be occurring.

Despite a growing concern with reading at the secondary level, there has been no comparable observational data on reading activity in content-area classrooms. The purpose of the research we have been doing is to systematically observe student and teacher communication in content classrooms, with a special focus on reading. This research grew out of our work with both content teachers and reading specialists who wanted more information about the amount and kinds of reading that secondary students are required to do. In this article we report the results of the first in a series of studies that we have been conducting for the last two years.

Collecting the data

Early in the spring of 1978 we identified seven teachers in the Eau Claire and LaCrosse areas who were willing to have us observe in their content classrooms, and based on logistical considerations, we selected six to participate in the study. These teachers taught biology, chemistry and physics, English, general science, math, and social studies. We audiotaped each of the six on four class periods over a two-week period, giving us a total of 24 tapes. Teachers did not know that the purpose of the study was to investigate the use of reading in content instruction. Nor did they know which classes would be visited or on which days the observations would be made. In addition to the audiotaping, logs were kept to record significant activity that might not be picked up by the microphone, such as a teacher writing information on the chalkboard as she was talking.

Analyzing the data

In order to systematically code classroom communication, we developed a 22-category observation schedule which we based on a language arts model (see Table 1). This observation schedule allowed us to determine percentages of class time spent in reading, writing, listening, discussion, and performing, either in isolation or in combination with each other. Three graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire were trained to use the schedule and each one independently coded the 24 audiotapes. We then pooled the coders' results and averaged them across teachers and occasions to generate the average percentages reported in Table 1.

Table 1

AVERAGE PERCENTAGES OF CLASS TIME SPENT IN VARIOUS FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Category	Percentage
Silent reading alone Example: Students read textbook or handout silently in class. No accompanying study guide, worksheet, etc.	2.3

Category	Percentage
Reading co-occuring with reading Example: Students use a reading guide as they read a chapter in class. The guide does not call for written responses.	0.4
Reading co-occurring with listening Example: A teacher explains a written handout to students.	5.1
Reading co-occurring with speaking Example: Students read a dialogue aloud in class.	0.0
Reading co-occurring with writing Example: Students take a written test.	18.1
Reading co-occurring with discussion Example: Teacher and students discuss responses to a written worksheet.	8.0
Reading co-occurring with reading and writing Example: Students use a dictionary to write definitions for words on a vocabulary worksheet.	0.2
Reading co-occurring with writing and discussion Example: Students work together to write answers to a worksheet.	5.6
Reading: other Example: Students work together reading an article, discussing its contents, and responding to a written worksheet.	11.6
Reading co-occurring with performance Example: Students follow directions on a worksheet to complete a science experiment.	6.5

Category	Percentage
Listening to content Example: Students listen to a lecture	18.5
Listening to information about class organization Example: Students listen to directions for completing an activity.	4.5
Listening to previews and reviews Example: Students listen to summary of previous day's topic.	2.0
Listening to references about class texts Example: Students listen to a reminder to use the trigonometry table in their text when they do their homework.	1.6
Listening to references to outside sources Example: Students listen to a recommendation about a good supplementary source of information.	0.3
Composition unrelated to a reading task Example: Students fill out daiiy entry for a journal they are keeping.	0.4
Writing that leads into or takes off from reading Example: Students write a summary of material they have already read.	1.3
Dictation Example: Students write down notes dictated by the teacher.	2.0
Discussion unrelated to reading Example: Students brainstorm in small groups.	1.2
Discussion leading into or taking off from reading Example: After reading a story, students discuss their responses.	2.0

Category	Percentage
Nonlanguage performance Example: Students examine specimens at lab stations.	1.0
Activities unrelated to content Example: Discipline	7.9

Results and Conclusions

Overall, 91.1% of the class time was spent in content-related communication. On the average, students spent 57.8% of total time in reading-related activities, 26.9% in listening, 1.7% in writing, 2.0% in dictation, and 3.2% in discussion. Listening was therefore the only language art that frequently occurred by itself, although our figure may be too high: even with the logs, some co-occurring reading, writing, or performance may not have been discernable on the audiotapes. When we looked more closely at the 57.8% of total class time spent on reading-related activities, we saw that reading by itself accounted for only a small part of that percentage. For 48.6% of class time reading co-occurred with performance. Reading most often co-occurred with writing, accounting for 18.1% of total class time. These data suggest that communication in content classrooms is complex and that reading is frequently interwoven with writing, listening, discussion, and performance activities.

Implications

Even though this study involved a small sample of teachers, we think the results are striking. Reading, in this study, rarely occurred by itself. Instead, it co-occurred with listening, discussion, writing, and performance. Much of the reading that we observed did not fit the stereotypical picture of textbook reading. It may be for this reason that many content teachers underestimate the importance of reading in their classrooms and the help that they might get from reading specialists in more effectively using nontextbook print such as tests, overhead transparencies, and worksheets. Systematic classroom observation can give us the data we need to tailor our expertise to meet the needs of content teachers.

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Twelve Ways To Build A Positive Reading Environment

by

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Two of the most important words in an effective reading program are attitudes and motivation. Too many children are "turned off" to reading. They're bored, listless and have a "who cares" attitude. In so many words they are saying: "I can read, but do I have to?"

Developing reading skills is important, of course, but if in doing so the child becomes disinterested very little is accomplished. Most children will encounter successful reading experiences and become involved if they sense a purpose and value for reading.

How can this be accomplished? Easily. It can be done by building a classroom environment that is conducive to reading and one which beckons kids to read. The remainder of this article will describe briefly twelve reading-related activities which classroom teachers have been conducting successfully in the New Haven public school system to develop a positive attitude toward reading and to motivate students to read willingly in a supportive reading environment.

1. Table Top Acres--Ten varieties of plants are labeled and displayed on tables. Pupils are responsible for plant care and books concerning plants are made available. Children refer to these books to determine the amount of sunlight each plant needs, water requirements, etc. The children can also read to follow directions for making additional

plants from cuttings.

2. Corner Cuties--Painted ice cream buckets can become a neat and appealing art center. The buckets are filled with materials for arts and crafts activities. Suggestions and directions for making a variety of arts and crafts projects are printed and placed in this art center. "Open time" is provided for children to visit Corner Cuties to construct dioramas, collages, mobiles and T.V. tuners.

3. Covering the Contents--Children join Book Clubs and pledge to read a certain number of books per month. Classroom library cards are completed and placed in an attractively-constructed pocket chart by the child so that an accurate record on the type and amount of books read is kept.

4. Spool Stools--Empty wire spools can usually be secured free of charge from a wire factory. These spools can then be brightly painted by the children and used in the library corner.

5. Bidding for Books--Children prepare short reports or "commercials" for the books they have read. Book auctions are then held regularly. The pupils bid for books they wish to read with play money.

6. Express It Don't Repress It--A tape recorder is available for students to use to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions about favorite story characters. Printed on cards and placed near the tape recorder are the following types of questions to stimulate this verbal flow about books:

1. What did you like or dislike about this character?
2. What would you have done differently to solve the problem this person encountered?
3. Describe a certain situation in this book and tell how you felt about how the characters involved handled the situation.

7. Rumor Has It--Stories are read and retold by individual students that must be proved or disproved by other students. For example, a student tells someone that Abe Lincoln grew a beard on a little girl's suggestion. This must be verified or disputed by checking materials in the classroom.

8. People from the Past--A large conch shell is used for transmitting messages from famous figures. These messages are recorded and, using a microphone in the shell, the child listens to the taped message. This deepens the tonal quality of the voice and even gives an "eerie" feeling to the listener.

9. Picture Picking Time--Children bring in old magazines. They clip pictures from these magazines and these pictures are used as a permanent school picture file. Pictures are filed under the categories People, Places and Things.

10. Adopt-A-Teen--Elementary grade pupils can choose high school students from a nearby high school as sponsors to whom they send accounts of their achievements. They can also hold "conferences" with their sponsors at report card time. The premise behind this activity is that pupils often need to see and relate to someone other than their peers or an adult.

11. Cut and Rap--Weekly panel discussions can be held. In these weekly rap sessions, children can zero in on such current issues as school vandalism, the energy crisis, inflation, and operation of neighborhood programs. Newspapers, magazines and other materials which deal with these issues should be readily available in the classroom for pupils to use for information and reference.

12. Local Yokel Day--Guest speakers from the surrounding neighborhoods are invited to speak with the children on local concerns and problems. Another dimension of this activity is to invite community residents who have traveled to interesting places to share their experiences and, if possible, to show objects and artifacts associated with these locales.

Summary

Individual conferences, observations and monthly checks by the teachers who have implemented these activities indicate that the children are more motivated to read and participate more fully in reading related activities. As the teachers put it: "Reading becomes contagious and the kids are thriving in their new environment." What more can we ask?

Teaching A Note-Taking Process

by

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One way for a reading resource teacher to help content teachers is to present a note-taking system which can be used in their classrooms. Presented here is a theory and a method for presenting the teaching of note-taking using the content area setting.

Research on the technique of note-taking reveals thirteen independent and/or interrelated points. Armstrong (1956) presents seven of these points. First, essentials should be known before class begins. That means students should have assignments read and written work completed. Second, each day, the notes should be titled and dated so that any one day or topic can be easily found. Third, when notes are condensed, full thoughts not topics should be written. Fourth, what is being said should be understood before notes are written. If the material is not understood, the student should make a marginal note to ask the teacher for an explanation. Space should also be left for the missing information. Fifth, notes should be organized as they are written. This can be done by simple indentation of minor points. Sixth, notes should be reviewed periodically over the next several weeks. Seventh, except for students who learn best by rewriting to aid remembering, notes should never be copied for the sake of neatness. On the other hand, rephrasing, condensing, adding information or reorganizing notes does promote recall. In these cases, a thinking process is taking place while the student is copying the notes. However, if the copying is being done merely for neatness, it is a waste of time.

Baldridge (1966) is the source of three additional points. First, notes should be reviewed and summarized within a twenty-four hour period. This summary should be included at the end of the day's notes. Research has shown that the student who reviews notes within a day of having taken them recalls more and as a result does better on tests. Second, the student may want to write only on the right hand side of the notebook. This leaves the left side open to write notes on the materials read in conjunction with the class. When facts and opinions different from those discussed in class are read, they can be included in the notebook directly to the left of classroom notes on the same topic. The student's own comments and/or questions on what was discussed in class, as well as page numbers on which the corresponding text material is presented could also be noted to the left. The technique of leaving the left page blank and available for related information is especially valuable for the student bound for additional education after high school. Third, the student may want to mark central themes and main points in order to highlight those points.

The three remaining note-taking points are: first, the student should be alert to important points (Taylor, Frackenpohl, Dechant, 1963). Teachers give clues to important points by repeating, restating, using the chalkboard, specific phrasing, and/or actually stating that a particular piece of information is or is not important for the notes. Second, notes should be a condensed version of what the teacher has said. This condensing should not be so short that the student later doesn't remember the thought behind it nor should it be so lengthy that more than what is needed has been written. Finally, instead of organizing notes by simple indentation, outline form may be useful. Depending on the style of the teacher, an outline may be simple with main points and supporting details easily identified, or may be complex with digressions and examples included in the presentation. Outline form is briefly reviewed during the presentation.

When these note-taking points are discussed in a class, examples from the reading specialist's and from the students' own experiences are used. For example, a notebook containing notes recently taken at either a conference or in a class is passed around. The students seem to find it interesting to

see a teacher's notes and to see that notes are not necessarily an example of neatness and legibility.

The actual note-taking presentation is a three step phase. A discussion of good note-taking is conducted with the students. Usually the discussion will bring out a few of the points listed above. Since some of the points are closely interrelated, only these eight are actually listed on the board: knowing the essentials, titling and dating, condensing, organizing, never copying, reviewing and summarizing, using the right hand side of the notebook and writing the main points.

Having discussed the theory behind note-taking, notes are then taken alongside the students while the content teacher presents the lesson for the day. Usually this lecture lasts about fifteen minutes. During the last five to ten minutes of class, the reading specialist's notes are presented to the students for comparison. Instead of just copying those notes on the board, information gathered by the students is elicited. That information is outlined on the board so that they can add or subtract information from their own notes. In addition, they can see the organization pattern of the lecture. This is a good time to write a summary and review the eight note-taking points.

A second visitation to the class involves note-taking alongside the students for the entire period. At the end of class, information is compared and a summary written. This gives the student another opportunity to write down anything he may have missed, to understand the organization pattern of the lecture/discussion, and to practice note-taking skills with immediate reinforcement.

On the final visit, notes are again taken with the students. The difference is that at the end of the class, the student's notes are collected and examined. Comments are made and notes returned the next day. Two or three samples of the students' notes are made into transparencies. The next day the samples are examined by the class, they are discussed according to the main note-taking points to discover which have or have not been included in a particular sample. This generally concludes the note-taking unit.

If at this point there are some students who are still having problems, it is possible for them to meet with the reading specialist on an individual basis. Another approach would be to team teach with the content teacher by grouping the class after a lecture/discussion. Those who continue having problems taking notes would meet with the reading specialist while the content area teacher would meet with the other students. Another adaptation or addition might be for the students to exchange notebooks and analyze each others' notes looking for the main note-taking techniques.

The basics of note-taking from lecture discussions have also been applied to note-taking from written material. While the presentation on note-taking in the classroom has been mainly directed at the general student body, some teachers with college bound students have asked for note-taking on written material. Although the same basic information is presented, practice is naturally done on written material. The material used is something that is actually assigned by the teacher. That way, the student not only learns the process of note-taking but also completes part or all of an assignment. Writing styles and organizational patterns of written materials can also be presented and discussed during this unit.

A further extension of this unit on note-taking from written material could include instruction on underlining in materials owned by the student. The following suggestions are made. When a student is marking in a book or article, only the essentials should be underlined. Students are cautioned that if underlining is done concurrently with reading, the whole book may result in being underlined. That means, then, that the student must read first, understand, then return to underline. Second, marginal notes should be used to make comments and/or ask questions. This encourages active thinking participation by the reader and, therefore, greater recall. Third, a uniform system of marking should be used from book to book. One method suggested by and adapted from Baldridge (1966) is to circle the central theme, underline the main points, and number important details. Students are encouraged to develop a system to best suit individual needs.

The unit on note-taking is adaptable and practical for students in any class. It is a good

reading/thinking process for students to learn in order to become more independent and mature in their study habits. Presentation of this study unit is another way to encourage a truly developmental reading program.

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I.S.S.R.: An Alternative To U.S.S.R.

by

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Although many children pass the criterion-referenced tests dealing with isolated reading skills, they are unable to use those skills to read. They are continually frustrated when confronted with unknown words and waste USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading) time in frustration.

Perhaps the difficulty with these children lies in the fact of insufficient practice in "putting it all together." It may also be due to over-emphasis on the grapho-phonic skills and not enough concentration on teaching the children to use the most valuable resource they bring to the reading process--their knowledge of language. Whether it may be insufficient practice in reading or over-emphasis on grapho-phonic skills, I believe regular sessions of prompting by the teacher when children are confronted with unknown words will enable the child to develop an easy and completely logical mode of word-attack.

In this article, I suggest a time block for ISSR: "Interrupted Sustained Silent Reading" to be interspersed with the regular period of USSR. During ISSR the child having trouble with the decoding process interrupts his reading to ask for help. This help is given in such a manner as to help the child ultimately acquire independence in decoding.

To develop a "set" for the method to be taught the children are taken through the following simulation in attacking unknown words using the following chart. Inform the children that the chart items will help them in figuring out unknown words as they read.

Try This

1. Skip it and go on.
2. Guess [What word will fit?
   What word will make sense?
3. Look at the word for parts I know.
4. Re-read.
5. Ask for help.

Step 1 - Skip It...

Using the following cloze sentence, explain that the first thing a good reader does is skip an unknown word. Many times other words in the sentence will "tell" you the unknown word.

"Mom _____ on her coat."

Step 2 - Take a good guess.

A good guess is one that makes sense.

"_____ are you going, Mom?"

Step 3 - If step 2 doesn't work, look at the troublesome word. Are there any parts you know? Think of other words you know that have one of the parts.

Step 4 - Read the sentence over thinking of the word-parts you know for the troublesome word.

Step 5 - If you've tried all the steps and still have trouble, ask for help.

The reader will observe that the first two directions involve the semantic and syntactic cueing systems and teach the child to use his/her knowledge of language first when encountering difficulty. Only after these fail should students resort to step three which involves the use of the grapho-phonic cueing system. The fourth step automatically teaches the child to back-track when meaning is not forthcoming and to seek additional clues to reveal the text. If the first four steps do not result in meaning, the child is instructed to ask for help. During ISSR time the teacher remains alert to the needs of children who request her aid at step five. The teacher again takes the child individually, through the steps.

An added bonus in watching the child cope with continuous prose materials is the diagnostic information gleaned. It is only in observing the child dealing with unrehearsed continuous prose reading that real diagnosis is possible. Decoding problems show themselves in unfamiliarity with word meanings, inability to deal with syntax, failure to notice the internal design of words, etc.

Whatever bonus results from ISSR, the prime purpose remains--helping the child get into the habit of using his/her valuable language resource in the decoding process. Interacting with orthographic features will give the child a method of dealing with the reading process.

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Helping Students Read Their Textbooks

by

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Content teachers work very hard and are knowledgable in their subject areas. They are creative, well-versed, and enthusiastic about teaching. Understandably, they are discouraged when students lack the skill to take advantage of the lessons. How can reading and content teachers help students to read the textbooks?

Definition of Reading

Reading is a complex process which is tied closely to thinking. William S. Gray defined reading as a four step process: 1) perception or recognizing and knowing the words; 2) comprehension or understanding what has been read, choosing the relevant facts, and retaining them; 3) reaction or thinking about what has been read and making decisions related to the material; and 4) integration or using the information in some way so that it becomes part of one's internal concept structure.

Application to Textbook Lessons

How can content teachers apply Gray's definition of the reading process to understanding a textbook? Let's examine each step. Perception is the introductory stage in which the teacher introduces a new chapter or topic. It is important that the student have an opportunity to see the vocabulary words and to think about them. The words or phrases can be listed on the blackboard and a conscious effort should be made to use the items in several sentences. This practice builds a background for the words and gives examples which illustrate their meaning in the

forthcoming reading assignment. After this introduction the students will feel comfortable when they see the words in print because they have a mental set which prepares them to understand what they are reading. This activity is not to be confused with vocabulary study that might be part of a study guide or follow up.

Comprehension can be enhanced by pre-reading the lesson. Structuring assignments prior to the actual reading is done by surveying the selection, predicting the main ideas, suggesting relationships between main ideas, explaining the pattern of writing and setting a purpose for reading.

The concepts in the assignment should be selected in advance and taught to the class. An outline on the board, a transparency, a diagram, or a verbal picture will help students to organize the reading. Many times teachers feel that if this is done, the lesson is "given" away. Richard Earle of McGill University states:

> Read Chapter 7 is the same as saying... 'Some important questions about our subject matter are answered in the reading assignment, but I'm not going to tell you what the questions are. You find the answers and tomorrow I'll let you know the questions. If your answers fit my questions, you win, if not, you lose.'

That is an extreme example but teachers do tend to feel uncomfortable about giving what might be considered too much support.

Reaction involves understanding and remembering material in the textbooks. After a student has read the assignment, he must react or become involved with the facts in some way. This is the critical point at which the material creates an impression and will be remembered. On the other hand, information that is received passively will soon be forgotten. Common reaction techniques have been question-answer discussion, test or quiz, and study guides. Simulated guides and small group discussions are variations that could be used. In addition, proving statements or defending a belief with facts from the lesson seem helpful. Students

are more likely to become involved if the teacher is enthusiastic and the techniques are varied.

Integration means using the information in some way or applying it to daily life. It can be done by presenting the student with a problem which touches his life: a simulation or game, an action project or activity, and some kind of class task, recitation, or a dramatic activity are often helpful. If the information is very difficult and abstract, a concrete comparison, example, or generalization should be given.

In using the four steps, it becomes obvious that the teacher is structuring the students' thinking while preparing them to read. Reading cannot be a passive process of word calling in which the mind is not engaged. Training the students as one teaches the content will create independent readers.

Other Techniques Related to Content Reading

1. Note-taking is difficult to teach unless the components are broken down and built up in sequential steps. The most basic task in taking notes from both lectures and reading materials is identifying key words or phrases. A technique that seems to help students identify key words involves a filmstrip with captions. The student is instructed to choose several words to represent the meaning of each caption. It is best to "walk through" this technique with students and teacher working orally to simulate the process. The thinking involved in the basic task of choosing key words from a filmstrip caption can be simulated by discussing possible choices, or by suggesting the best wording. After practicing with the class, students should be led to make choices independently. After mastering key word selection, the key words can be grouped for outline and summary purposes.

2. SQ3R summarizing is a variation of the SQ3R study method. Headings are turned into questions as in the original technique. Three or four important details and the main idea are selected to answer the question. This technique can be used in a variety of ways for notetaking, summarizing, mastering key points, and abstracting knowledge.

3. Generalizing requires a student to distinguish between general and specific. There are many reading texts which have appropriate lessons. With this as in any given skill one wishes to teach, it is important to decide on the stages or developmental steps necessary for the student to master the task. For example, steps to making generalizations might include:

a. grouping specific items in the room in general categories.

b. grouping specific items in the lesson such as names or details.

c. selecting a general statement from several choices.

d. writing general statements which summarize specific statements.

e. locating general statements made by the textbook author and identifying the specific details that support the generalization.

Reading incorporated into content can be used effectively to enhance the content. Content reading helps students to transfer their skills in a meaningful way and provides a means of leading students to independent learning.

Program Assessment Where It Counts: A School-Based Model

by

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Curriculum development models are not new on the educational scene. They can be traced back through the 1920's and 30's when educators like Rugg and Tyler presented models which are still relevant to curriculum planning. Tyler demonstrated the importance of evaluation in curriculum making and introduced this element into his curriculum development model in 1939 (Saylor and Alexander, 1974). Today, nationwide attention is focused on evaluating the public schools' performance in educating students at all levels. In the midst of an era of public scrutiny, schools find a need to actively respond to demands.

This article will explain how one school, Samuel Gompers Elementary, in Madison, Wisconsin responded to the pressures for accountability. The internal pressures for accountability began when the staff pinpointed reading failure as one of the greatest sources contributing to poor self-concepts and behavior problems in students. The staff decided to make the improvement of the reading program a priority for the school. A school philosophy which stressed positive self-concepts and success in learning was adopted by the staff. This action was the beginning

of a process which would eventually produce a model for program assessment.

Steps to an Assessment

The curriculum development model introduced by Tyler (1949) asks four questions:

1. What educational pruposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

These questions were addressed by the teachers at Gompers in the following ways:

1. A reading leadership team developed a reading philosophy and student and program goals.
2. The teachers at Gompers Elementary School agreed on the reading program goals which were most important to the school at the time.
3. Teachers reviewed the reading program in light of the goals and looked at various resources which might contribute to realization of the goals.
4. Teachers' questions about the reading program were:
   a. What was being done well?
   b. What was not being done?
   c. How did they need to improve to provide the kind of reading program they wanted?
   d. How should new and existing resources be used?

These questions needed to be answered through a procedure organized to draw all the variables together. Thus, an assessment model was developed by a school reading committee composed of the principal, the curriculum coordinators and teachers representing various grade levels.

The Assessment Model

The reading committee agreed upon components which they believed were important in order to answer the questions about the instructional program. The process needed to be direct, to be easily understood and to provide opportunity for continual input from the staff. The complete assessment model had six components:

1. Goal Statement
   The staff should agree upon program goals which are most important for their reading program. They should not try to assess too many goals. It is important not to collect too much information to deal with simultaneously. Example: The teacher will provide time within the reading program when students can pursue their own reading interests.

2. Goal Qualifiers
   For each goal selected, teachers make statements about what ideally should be happening if the goal is being met. The number of statements may vary depending upon the complexity of the goal being assessed.
   Example: Each teacher will provide at least one hour per week for Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading. The teacher will allow a student to choose the material to be read during USSR.

3. Assessment Questions
   This component includes all the questions which could be asked to ascertain whether the goal qualifier is being accomplished.
   Example: Has the teacher or team determined a time for USSR? Do the students choose their own reading material?

4. Assessment Procedure
   a. What methods are going to be used to answer the previously stated questions? What evidence will be collected? How will it be collected? Example: Provide question on survey regarding frequency of participation in USSR and reaction to participation.
   b. Who is responsible for carrying out the assessment procedures. A reading committee should be identified early to do the organizational work and be responsible

for data collection, interpretation of data, and follow up. Example: The reading committee will survey teachers.

5. Time
This component deals with when the assessment shall be done or repeated if necessary. Example: Survey will be completed by a given date.

6. Follow up
This component may be the most important in the entire assessment process. It is here that decisions are made about whether or not the goal is being accomplished; what changes may be necessary; how could improvements be made; what action needs to be taken? Example: The reading committee will determine the merit of USSR by reviewing the data and recommend any changes necessary in the program.

Results of the Assessment

Although the assessment process continues, changes have already been made at Gompers Elementary School. By identifying the goals and goal qualifiers, teachers became more aware of what they were doing within their own classes. Some decided to use different materials to better meet the individual needs of students. One teacher made a decision to completely individualize her reading program. Communication was improved both within and across grade levels. Appreciation for the problems other teachers were having in finding suitable instruction materials increased. Data was collected to be used in making informed decisions about new instructional material selections.

Data was collected to help make the most efficient use of a new instructional materials center which had just been opened. The data provided information for teachers to make changes in their students' use of the facilities. In-service programs were planned to help alleviate deficiencies which groups of teachers felt existed. Parental and community involvement in the reading program increased. Another important outcome of the assessment process was that teachers examined their total reading program and reaffirmed what they were doing well and should continue doing. Sound practices were defined

and reinforced. Assessment does not always call for change!

Summary

The assessment model developed in Madison is a working model. It provides systematic review of program goals. It is flexible and allows for the addition or deletion of goals as needs change. Goal qualifiers can change as the students' needs change. Followup is a critical aspect which is built into the model. The cyclical nature of the model provides for continuous assessment. It is important to remember, as with any new project, it is best to begin slowly and build on success.

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RESEARCH UPDATE:

Content Area Comprehension Strategies

by

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The most commonly held view of content area reading is that readers apply different reading-thinking strategies for each area. According to Robinson (1975) the reader in science must use enumeration, classification, generalization, and problem solving strategies, while the reader in social studies must use topic development, generalization, sequence, and effect-oause. Authors like Strang, McCullough and Traxler (1967), Herber (1970), Shepherd (1973), and Estes (1979) have argued that readers are expected to "change gears" when reading in different content areas, and that students should be taught the specific strategies for each area. Pavlik (1978) reasons that students moving from class to class require from ten to twenty minutes just to adjust to the different vocabulary and thinking patterns involved in each new subject.

But do students actually use different strategies when they are reading in different content areas? It is impossible to look inside the minds of students as they are reading. The only way to find out what strategies students are using is to ask them. Early research studies of reading strategies did just that. Piekarz (1956), Squire (1964), and Smith (1967) asked students to introspect about the processes they were using when reading. But the method is not entirely satisfactory because students are not always capable of verbalizing their thought processes. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) argue that introspection cannot tell everything about cognitive processes such as reading because the students may not be aware of the strategies they are using, and, even if they were, they might not tell.

Thus the task of the researcher is to invent a task where the students must respond, and then infer from the responses what strategies are being employed. Fareed (1971) employed this technique to uncover differences in the way students read biology and history. He had sixth grade students read a passage and then reread it orally, giving any thoughts, feelings, or reactions as they read. These interpretive responses were then categorized into seven strategies: reproduction, inquiry, personal judgement, emotional reaction, literary appreciation, association, illumination by comparison, and miscellaneous. Using these categories he found that readers do differ in strategies when reading history and biology. In reading historical material readers made more rational evaluations, emotive reactions, and associations. Students reading biology used more illuminations by comparison, expansions, illustrations and sensory images. Students were more careful to get literal meaning from biology, and drew more inferences and implications from history.

Olshavsky (1976-77) had sixth graders stop at the end of each independent clause and tell what they were thinking. This method, called protocol analysis, is based on the work of Newell and Simon (1972) who attempted to learn about people's thought processes while solving puzzles and problems. Olshavsky compared good and poor readers reading abstract and concrete materials. She found that students reading abstract material used more strategies, particularly inference, use of context, and synonym substitution. Concrete material caused students to reread, add information, use personal identification and make hypotheses.

Kavale and Schreiner (1979) asked above average and average readers to verbalize their thoughts as they responded to four types of multiple choice questions: cause and effect, inference, verbal reasoning, and main idea. Responses were then categorized into eleven categories according to whether they were text dependent or non-textual. They found that students did use different strategies for correctly answering the different types of questions, and that good readers used effective strategies more often than average readers.

Does all of this mean that readers do consciously use different strategies when reading different

content areas? Although the evidence from these studies would suggest that different strategies are used, and that good readers more often apply them, the studies also showed that all students used all of the strategies some of the time regardless of the material. A biology book may call upon emotive reactions, and inference questions may sometimes require literal recall strategies. The differences found in these studies were in frequency of response rather than type of response. Thus Goodman and Burke (1972), Burmeister (1976) and Robinson (1975) may be correct in asserting that readers must be taught general comprehension strategies which will apply to all content areas, and, at the same time, that each content area teacher can emphasize certain skills which are more likely to be employed in that particular subject.

The final question is: given that comprehension strategies are important, and that good readers tend to apply more effective strategies in different content areas, what can be done to teach students how to use these strategies? Dansereau (1978) reviews the history of attempts to train students in the use of strategies and says:

> By not stressing learning strategies, educators, in effect, discourage students from developing and exploring new strategies, and, in so doing, limit students' awareness of their cognitive capabilities. The answer to this situation is clear: educators and researchers should be redirecting at least some of their efforts to the development and training of appropriate learning strategy skills.

Specifically, Dansereau taught students to use paraphrasing, visual imagery, networking or associations, and analysis of key ideas. In addition, he taught students to use three support strategies: positive learning attitude, concentration, and self monitoring. His conclusion was that these strategies can be taught, and that students do benefit from direct instruction in learning strategies.

Classroom teachers can benefit from this research in two ways. First they can identify the reading strategies that will be most useful to their students. And second, they can attempt to teach students how

to apply these strategies when reading. In this sense, every teacher can become a researcher learning which strategies prove most effective, and how they can best be taught.

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Administering Reading Programs: Secondary Reading

by

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Looking at reading in an historical perspective, one notes that definitions of reading have usually been written and interpreted in terms of current general educational goals and dictated by the values of society. A review of the history of education indicates that the purposes and processes of reading were related directly to society's expectations for the school and the subject.

Definitions of secondary reading necessarily preclude certain philosophical assumptions regarding the role of reading in the curriculum. The idea that reading instruction should be part of the curriculum in each content area implies a broad definition because of the unique demands which each subject area makes in terms of vocabulary differences, organization or thought patterns, and specific symbols. Reading instruction that is defined as a program of direct skill instruction in reading and/or English classes recognizes a commonality of reading skills across all content areas and the existence of the transfer of learning.

In the years after World War II, educators came to accept the importance of reading instruction within the secondary curriculum, however, recognition of the need did not insure implementation of practices to meet that need. In a report based upon twenty-five surveys published between 1941 and 1970, Hill (1970) states,

> In spite of the gradual establishment of the secondary reading concept during the past three decades, and even considering the upsurge in secondary program numbers which has occurred in recent years, professional

> euphoria about the present status of secondary reading programs is hardly warranted.

In present-day America, being able to read is a condition of economic survival. The literature is saturated with proclamations of the need and the right to read. Sheer survival in this fast, technical, success-oriented society is dependent, at least in part, on reading performance. People read for information necessary to their job performances or their roles as thinking, acting citizens and such "rational cognitive needs remain among the most important reasons for teaching reading." (Harris, 1973)

There is little question as to the need for reading instruction in the high school, rather the question is whether it should be implemented via direct skill instruction in reading and/or English classes or by a fusion of reading/study skills with content classes. As Early (1973) indicates, it is a question we have been asking for a long time:

> In the past thirty years, the status of reading instruction in the secondary school has changed very little. In 1972 as in 1941, we are still debating the merits of special reading services and urging the whole school faculty to teach reading in the content fields.

A review of the literature relative to the debate indicates that the fusion of reading within the content areas is widely advocated. The rationale is that,

> Reading cannot be taught in a vacuum. When instruction is given in the reading skills, the material must include some sort of information. The reading skills are supposed to help the student get from the language used by the author the information pertinent to the subject. (Shepherd, 1978)

Likewise, there is much agreement in the literature that "the teacher who has the background and expertise in a specific subject is the one best qualified to adapt the reading skills to it." (Shepherd, 1973) Though there certainly is a commonality of skills in all areas, specific subjects require pertinent application.

The problem "does not seem to be in developing workable and valid methods of reading instruction, but in getting subject area teachers to implement these methods." (Cassidy, 1973) Why? One of the reasons cited by Braam and Walker (1973) was that most of the subject area teachers were unaware of the majority of reading skills needed by students to read successfully in the various disciplines. Morrison (1979), however, indicates that this deficiency may be less prevalent today. The four hundred subject area teachers polled by her not only identified the reading skills they considered relevant for mastery of their subject matter courses, but also indicated whether or not students would need their help in the acquisition and application of these essential skills.

To help subject area teachers acquire the necessary techniques of reading instruction, most successful secondary reading programs incorporate pre-service and inservice education that stress practical, specific strategies for integrating reading instruction with the content of the course. These programs successfully incorporate both the fusion of reading skills with content and direct skill instruction. For example, the dual pruposes of the program described by Trout (1970) were to help teachers become competent teachers of reading in their subject areas while simultaneously providing separate reading instruction.

Most of the successful programs cited in the literature identified these factors as essential to a successful secondary reading program:

1. program planning according to individual school needs
2. a two-fold goal emphasis upon reading/study skill development and the fostering of interest in reading
3. specific goal emphasis in the form of behavioral objectives
4. administrative and staff involvement and competence
5. availability of funds
6. adequate facilities and materials
7. a multi-faceted approach to the teaching of reading

Administrators of these programs did not view direct skill instruction and reading content fusion as a dichotomy. Although they viewed the roles of the reading teacher and the subject area teacher as different, they also saw these roles as mutually supportive. Administrators of successful high school reading programs realize that it is not necessary for secondary teachers to abandon content as they endeavor to develop and refine reading skills, nor is it sufficient to assign the reading teacher the sole responsibility for the teaching of reading. Ideally, there are two components in a high school reading program. One of these involves setting up special reading improvement classes. The other involves reading resource help to instructors in the various subject area classes. Both of these components are necessary since each can accomplish things that the others cannot.

Though the plans for secondary reading programs described in many texts indicate a commonality of factors deemed essential to success, "THE master plan" that will meet the needs of every community and every student is yet to be devised. The interaction of differences in goals, organization, staff involvement and competencies, methodology and materials available continues to provide secondary administrators with the interesting challenge of combining the various components into a unique program that will best meet the reading needs of their students.

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Professional Materials On Review

Weiss, M. Jerry. From Writers to Students: The Pleasures and Pains of Writing. Newark: International Reading Association, 1979, 113 pages.

Reviewed by
Dr. James Raabe
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Luther High School
Onalaska, Wisconsin

When I first saw the title of this book, I was very excited. I misinterpreted the title and thought that the book would be a treatise on the importance of good writing on the road to expert scholarship. When I investigated further and found that the book was a series of 17 interviews with authors of adolescent literature, I began to wonder whether it would be worth my time to read it, but, having predetermined that I would review this publication for the WSRA Journal, I forced myself to begin reading. I am pleased with this decision, for I thoroughly enjoyed this report from the IRA Literature for Adolescents Committee.

The interviews were designed to solicit the same kind of information from each author, information which is aimed primarily at the audience of their books, the teenagers. While the information and opinions given are as varied as the "interviewees," several reoccurring themes stand out. Most stress, and stress strongly, the importance of wide reading to prepare one for good writing. Such information "from the horse's mouth" should help encourage the reluctant reader who is not so willing to take the teachers' encouragements at face value.

Another thought stressed by most, although not by all, is the need for persistent and frequent writing and rewriting. The authors do not sugarcoat the fact that good writing is much hard work and takes a good amount of time for revision and rewriting.

Reading teachers, literature teachers, and teachers of creative writing should read this publication and see whether there is not much valuable information for their classes. The interviews have been recorded and are available on cassette tapes from the IRA. If one finds the interviews as worthwhile for his classes as I did, he may consider getting the particularly interesting interviews on tape for classroom and/or individual use.

I encourage the reader of From Writers to Students not to miss careful reading of the introduction (pages 1-3). It contains an interesting thumbnail sketch of what adolescent literature today really is. If you have not kept current with its development, you may be surprised.

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Gran, Eldon. Knots From a Bored of Education: Ways to Individualize Your Basic Program. Amherst, ME: Mandala Publishers, 1977, 161 pages.

Reviewed by
Jo Paulson
K-12 Reading Specialist
Wisconsin Dells Public Schools

Are you dissatisfied with methodically plodding through your Wrangling With Reading series? Are you frustrated with the three reading groups, the Hollyhocks, Sunflowers, and Dandelions (or the Delightful, Bearable, and Hopeless)? Do your eyes water while correcting the reams of exciting and challenging worksheets you have run off on the Purple Paper Pooper? If so, read on, for Eldon Gran has written a book he says is "...dedicated to helping teachers use more creatively those materials they will have to use, anyway--and hopefully to go beyond those materials as quickly as possible." Knots From a Bored of Education will entertain you, shame you, and inspire you to make some child-centered changes within your classroom.

This stimulating resource evolved from thirty years of action research, searching for ways to use traditional materials in a more personal manner. The result is a comprehensive book offering the elementary-level teacher alternatives for each subject

she teaches. In Part One, "The Tools", Gran offers chapters on reading, spelling, math, language, and grammar. The chapter, "The Language is for Everybody", should be required reading for every elementary teacher. Part Two, "The Wrest of the Day", receives inadequate attention, but by this point we understand his philosophy and can make our own adjustments. Included in this portion are chapters on the fine arts, science, and social studies.

Gran's philosophy is to use the child's language, interests, and world to teach everything from weekly spelling demons, to the "ch" sound to the "dismal points" in math. If the treatment in the book is facetious, the underlying messages are serious: Children themselves are the teachers' greatest resources; good teaching always begins with experiences, not definitions; building on the positive produces successful learners, not labeled failures.

Despite the fact that Gran urges the teacher to move beyond the selected texts at the earliest possible moment, his ideas are not radical. Through many years of teaching he has developed realistic, exciting learning experiences--the kind that flashes a light bulb in the child's head as he exclaims, "Hey, I get it! I know!"

Resources for Teachers

by

Hilda Baumgartner
Reading Teacher
Milwaukee Public Schools

Reading in the content areas usually refers to comprehension and other skills that are required to read materials which are not a part of a developmental reading program. Skills needed for reading content area materials are covered by most developmental reading programs. It is the teacher's task to help students apply their reading skills.

Content materials often contain aids to call the student's attention to important information such as tables, illustrations, charts, maps, graphs and glossaries. Students must be given many opportunities to reinforce the skills used in content area materials. The following sources offer suggestions which could be adapted or used in conjunction with content area materials.

Berman, Michelle, and Shevitz, Linda. I Can Make It On My Own. Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc., Santa Monica, California, 1978.

This resource book of functional reading activities consists of six chapters each presenting a set of exercises around a central theme. The themes are concerned with experiences that students might be confronted with in day to day life outside of school and can be expanded to meet their needs. The chapters are titled:

1. Homebound
2. Shopping Spree
3. That's Entertainment
4. Errand-Go-Round
5. Take-a-Trip
6. Vacationing

Love, Marla. 20 Reading Comprehension Games, Pearon Publishers, Inc., Belmont, California, 1977.

This book consists of game activities which strengthen skills needed to successfully read content area materials. They are designed to be used in grades four through six. The six chapters include activities for:

1. Following Directions
2. Finding Details
3. Finding Main Idea
4. Drawing Conclusions
5. Locating Information
6. Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

Miles, Kate and Stahl, Paula. Use the News. Prentice-Hall Learning Systems, Inc., 1974.

This book is designed to help teachers use the newspaper. The activities lend themselves to reinforcing skills or concepts related to content area materials including art, health, language, math, music, reading, social science, and spelling. Ideas can be adapted for students in kindergarten through the eighth grade.

Piercey, Dorothy. Reading Activities In Content Areas. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, 1976.

This is an excellent resource book focusing on learning activities in a wide variety of content areas. It consists of over 550 skill building activities appropriate for use in middle and secondary school.

Part I focuses on the classroom techniques that the teacher can use in developing student success, and Part II provides activities for practicing skills necessary for successful learning in each subject area.

Extra Extra. Teachers Market Place, 16220 Orange Avenue, Paramount, CA 90723, 10 Issues $9.00.

Printed on newsprint, the activities in this newspaper emphasize the basic skills and reinforce learning in all curricular areas. The activities

presented include projects, games and informal activities for student involvement in many phases including the following topics:

Celebrations
Famous Firsts
Birds
Circus
Plants
Flying Objects

Each large sheet of newsprint is divided into eight equal sections and gives the appearance of a series of eight worksheets put together.

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INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION
for educators concerned about reading

A nonprofit association of over 60,000 members, IRA has programs designed to fit the needs of every educator involved in reading instruction. *Journals*: The Reading Teacher, Journal of Reading, Reading Research Quarterly. *Conventions*: Approximately 12,000 persons are expected May 5-9, 1980 in St. Louis, Missouri. *Affiliates*: There are more than 1,050 affiliates in almost every state and province of the United States and Canada and 26 nations. *Publications*: IRA offers more than 150 individual publications, including from 15 to 20 new publications each year. If you want to know more, write: International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19711, U.S.A.

D. P. I. Reading Newsline

by

Ellen M. Ryan
Reading Supervisor
Wisconsin Right to Read Effort

With New Year's Day not far behind us, there is still time to spark up our reading programs and to consider some professional resolutions for the new semester.

In considering the components of a K-12 reading program, one top priority must be to promote an interest in reading. There are a number of ways to motivate children to read that have been working successfully. Some school districts that have tried SSRT (Silent Sustained Reading Time) and DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) have found that children will read if given blocks of time in which to read. Such projects are successful because the children are motivated to read and the more they read, the better readers they become. From experience we learn that children indeed learn to read by reading.

In addition we have learned that kids (all ages) like to be read to. Perhaps now is the time to consider how to increase the amount of time teachers, administrators, parents, and students spend reading aloud to one another.

There are any number of other good motivating techniques, but the most outstanding successes have been in programs such as RIF (Reading Is Fundamental), in which the student is given a choice of free books. This program has been working so well that the federal government which has been matching funds, recently decided, that if the free selection of books for personal ownership turned kids on to reading, then perhaps their participation should be increased. Consequently, if you are considering becoming involved in a RIF program or expanding your present one,

U.S.O.E. will now match your contribution three to one (3-1). Additional information regarding RIF can be obtained from the Reading Section Office at the Department of Public Instruction or by calling 608-266-2799.

Before the winter blues set in, let's revitalize our reading programs with some strong resolutions and remember that:

Kids Who Read Were Read To,
Take Time to Read,
Keep Your Heart Contented, and
Read to Your Heart's Content.

From The Editor

This issue of the Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal contains the annual evaluation form. Please remove it from the center of your copy, complete it, and return it to me as soon as possible. Your cooperation makes it possible for this journal to be a useful and professional publication which serves its readers. Thank you. The rest of this column will be devoted to letters received from two of our readers. If you are concerned about the misinformation published in the November 1, 1979 issue of Family Circle, please share these letters and the official International Reading Association position as described by Dr. David Gustafson in his "President's Message" with your administrators and school board members.

Suzanne Jund
Journal Editor

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December, 1979

Dear Reading Specialist,

You read Rudolph Flesch's article, "Why Johnny Still Can't Read," in the November 1, 1979 issue of Family Circle, didn't you? No doubt your reaction to the piece was similar to the reactions of many other reading specialists in the country: wasn'tthatarticle terriblehowdiditevergetprintedIhopesomebodydoessomethingaboutit?

The International Reading Association (I.R.A.) Board of Directors responded to the Flesch article in a statement distributed to its members (Farr, 1979). Wisconsin State Reading Association (W.S.R.A.) president, David Gustafson, has also drafted a response which appears in this journal for reading professionals. It is the members of I.R.A. and its local affiliates who will see these statements. For the most part, we already know and have faith in the positions taken by these organizations. It is not I.R.A. and W.S.R.A members who need more information about reading and

instructional reading programs, it is the thousands of concerned parents, school administrators, school board members, and classroom teachers to whom we ought to address our responses.

My purpose in writing to you is to help you see the responsibility you have for your home and school communitties as an expert in reading. You must respond to Flesch's remarks if reading experts are to reach the people who have the least information. You were hired because of your knowledge about the relationships among learning, the reading process, and reading instruction. Share that knowledge so that parents and school personnel will be able to evaluate critically the opinions of popular authors lisk Flesch.

A response to a parent, teacher or administrator who asks about the Flesch article or to someone who cited the article as support for a particular school policy would include the following information:

1. There are more than two methods for teaching reading ("Phonics First" and "Look-Say").

2. It is doubtful that any one method of teaching reading will be successful with all children. Reading research has yet to identify a single approach to reading instruction which is consistently superior inteaching the various reading skills (Bond and Dykstra, 1967).

3. Research has shown that children today are better readers than children were 30 years ago. There is no evidence that people are less literate today than they were in decades past. Indeed, people today have superior reading skills (Farr, 1977).

4. It is doubtful that there are schools where sight word vocabulary is the only word identification skill being taught. Furthermore, there is no formal reading program called "Look and Say."

5. The sound-symbol relationships in English are not consistent enough to justify only teaching phonics to readers. Children need to learn the other wood identification skills in order to insure success in identifying words.

6. There are two recognized approaches to teaching phonics (analytic and synthetic). Both have advantages and disadvantages. Neither is an "imitation" method of teaching phonics.

7. Flesch has attacked twelve reputable basal reading programs by making false statements about the characteristics of each program and urging that these programs be barred from instructional reading programs.

You may wish to point out other problems with Flesch's position, or perhaps you see the same problems I've described. Nevertheless, be prepared to explain your position to others.

You can make a difference if you counter biased journalism with facts and supporting evidence. Your responsibility as a school reading specialist can and ought to be extended to include all people associated with the school. After all, parents, administrators, and school board members are influential in policy making decisions which may ultimately affect your program. Therefore, I urge you to respond to Flesch's article by 1) speaking to your local parent-teacher organization, 2) addressing your local school board, 3) discussing the issue informally with the teachers in your school, and 4) writing to the editor of your local newspaper.

Sincerely yours,

Linda M. McHugh
Lecturer
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

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Flesch, R. Why Jhonny still can't read. Family Circle, 92 (15), 26-46.

December 5, 1979

Dear Editors:

It was with dismay that members of the Madison Area Reading Council read Rudolph Flesch's article, "Why Johnny Still Can't Read," in the November, 1979 issue of Family Circle. As teachers, principals, and reading specialists we feel you have done a great disservice to the American public by printing Flesch's inflammatory and misleading statements. His article ignores important reading research, presents much false information about reading instruction and materials, defines reading as a meaningless process, and makes several potentially harmful suggestions to vulnerable parents.

In the past fifteen years, researchers in the field of psycholinguistics have made exciting discoveries about reading that contradict Flesch's "phonics-first" philosophy. Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith have pointed out that reading is not a precise process in which the reader decodes each sound according to complex rules. Instead, according to psycholinguistic theory, the reader predicts what may be on the written page based upon past experiences with print, examines only some of the most helpful letters (I Like e_ _ s and b _ _ _n for breakfast.), makes "educated guesses" about unfamiliar words based on context clues, and masters the "basic skill" of getting meaning from the printed page by actually reading interesting "whole language" as early and as often as possible.

Flesch's article is filled with false information that seems to be designed to direct public hostility toward teachers and publishers. First, Flesch's description of the "two methods" of teaching reading, LOOK-SAY or PHONICS, is a gross over-simplification. Teachers today work hard to provide students with a wide variety of reading strategies. Next, Flesch's attack on twelve major publishers of instructional materials is not based on fact. Several of the programs he mentions as unacceptable are currently in use in our area schools and were selected with great care by highly-trained professionals. Contrary to Flesch's review, these materials contain interesting stories and well developed word identification and comprehension skills activities. Phonics is certainly

included as one of the many tools available to readers. Finally, Flesch holds up the "Phonics Five" as the answer to all reading problems. If these materials are so effective, why were they chosen by only a "few" New York principals? Where is the research to prove they are superior? How can a teacher justify asking a child to read "Nat sat on a mat with a fat cat."?

Flesch claims he can teach any child to read with his methods, but what exactly does he mean by "reading"? "Comprehension" is never mentioned in his article. Flesch seems to define reading as merely a decoding process rather than a meaning-getting process. Programs that stress decoding sometimes produce individuals who can sound-out words but who seldom choose reading as a worthwhile activity.

Finally, Flesch should be condemned for his scare tactics and ridiculous advice to parents. Rather than pulling children out of schools, parents should be encouraged to discuss their concerns about reading instruction with teachers and principals. Instead of teaching often confusing phonics skills at home, parents should be advised to read to their children so they can become familiar with interesting words, characters, plots, and the whole range of emotions that can be triggered by good books.

As professionals in the field of reading, we feel you owe your readers an apology and an explanation of the facts about reading in our schools today. People depend upon Family Circle to provide accurate information and practical suggestions; in this instance, you have failed to do so. We hope to see more truthful and positive articles about reading instruction published in Family Circle.

The Executive Board
Madison Area Reading Council
Madison, Wisconsin